



# Simple Steps...to protect kids

**Environmental Health News for 5-Star Childcare Facilities**

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## **A quick note.....**

The appearance of the newsletter is different this issue because of some technical difficulties which we hope to resolve for the next issue. This newsletter is provided by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management for child care facilities participating in the 5-Star Environmental Recognition Program. This newsletter provides information on environmental issues affecting children. **Feel free to use these articles in your own newsletters, and post this newsletter and the information provided in areas where parents will have access to it.** If you have any questions or comments, please contact Gayla McCarty at 800-988-7901.

### **Clean Air Month in May Focuses on Indoor Air Quality Problems**

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), levels of air pollution inside the home can be two to five times higher than outdoor levels.

Like adults, children spend more than 90 percent of their time indoors. Young people are particularly susceptible to indoor air pollution because they breathe in 50 percent more air per pound than adults. If indoor air quality is poor, they inhale and absorb a greater volume of contaminants into the lungs.

"Evidence suggests that poor indoor air quality may be a more likely trigger of childhood asthma than outdoor pollution," said Dr. Ian Greaves, an environmental medical specialist.

As part of an ongoing partnership to educate the public on indoor air quality issues, 3M and the American Lung Association Health House program are offering a booklet, "Breathe Easier: Kids." The guide is filled with tips to help reduce exposure to pollutants and allergens that can be detrimental to children. To obtain a copy free of charge, call 1-800-388-3458 or send an e-mail with

your name and mailing address to  
[3mfiltrete@3mservice.montagenet.com](mailto:3mfiltrete@3mservice.montagenet.com).

Here are several tips from the booklet:

- Children who live with smokers inhale many pollutants in secondhand tobacco smoke. Don't let anyone smoke in your home.
- Store cleaning, pesticides, paint and other household chemicals away from children. If you use these products, make sure that you do so in an area with adequate ventilation. Read labels and look for the least toxic alternatives.
- Use a high efficiency furnace filter, such as those with electrostatically charged fibers that capture more allergens and other pollutants than the typical fiberglass filter.
- To reduce sources of moisture in the home, fix leaks and keep basements and crawl spaces as dry as possible. Run the bathroom exhaust fan to reduce moisture levels there.

# Asthma & Allergy Awareness Month Highlights Leading Childhood Illness

Asthma is a reversible obstructive lung disease, caused by an increased reaction of the airways to various stimuli. It is a chronic condition with acute symptoms. Asthma can be a life-threatening disease if not properly managed. It is estimated that 24.7 million persons have been diagnosed with asthma; more than a third of them (at least 7.7 million) are children under 18.

Asthma is the leading serious chronic illness among children. Most have mild to moderate problems, which can be controlled by treatment at home or in the doctor's office. For some children the illness causes numerous visits to the hospital emergency room. Asthma is the number one cause of hospitalization among children under the age of 15. There were close to 658,000 pediatric emergency room visits in 1999 due to asthma.

Asthma is characterized by excessive sensitivity of the lungs to various stimuli. Triggers range from viral infections to allergies, to irritating gases and particles in the air. Each child reacts differently to the factors that may trigger asthma, including:

- Respiratory infections and colds
- Allergic reactions to pollen, mold, animal dander, dust, and cockroaches
- Vigorous exercise
- Cigarette smoke

Each case of asthma is unique. Therefore, it is important to keep track of the factors that you know provoke asthma episodes. Because the symptoms do not always occur right after exposure, this may take a bit of detective work.

## Pest Control Policy for Indiana Child Care Facilities Adopted in February

This policy was adopted by the Indiana Pesticide Review Board, and seeks to prevent children from being exposed to pests and pesticides, a major contributor to poor indoor air quality. Following is the policy itself:

### **Pest Control Policy for Indiana Child Care Facilities Dated: 2-17-03**

#### **Policy Statement**

This child care facility is committed to providing children in its care with a safe environment. It seeks to prevent children from being exposed to pests and pesticides. While pesticides protect children and property from pests such as insects, weeds, and rodents that may be found in the facility and its surrounding grounds, under some circumstances they may pose a hazard to children and staff. To minimize potential pesticide exposure to children and staff, pest control practices in this facility will include a variety of non-chemical and chemical methods.

#### **Commitments**

This policy covers the areas used by the child care facility. This child care facility will:

1. Designate and identify a contact person to answer questions from parents and staff about this policy and to coordinate implementation of this policy with others such as the landlord and pest and lawn care management professionals.
2. Inform parents and staff members in writing of the facility's pest control policy.
3. Base pest management decisions on the results of regular inspections. The facility will avoid routine use of pesticides not exempted below.

4. Ensure that pesticides used at this facility will be applied by certified pesticide applicators or registered technicians.
5. Ensure that pesticides will not be applied when children are present at the facility. Toys and other items mouthed or handled by the children will be removed from the area before pesticides are applied. Children will not return to the treated area within two hours of a pesticide application or as specified on the pesticide label, whichever time is greater.
6. In the event of an emergency where pests pose an immediate health threat to children and staff (e.g. wasps) and pesticides are applied, ensure that children will not return to the treated area within two hours of a pesticide application or as specified on the pesticide label, whichever time is greater.
7. Provide at least two operational days but not more than 30 days advance notice of pesticide application to parents and staff except in emergencies where pests pose an immediate health threat to children or staff (e.g. wasps).
8. Notify parents and staff as soon as possible when advance notice is not provided and include an explanation of the emergency, the reason for the late notice and the name of pesticide applied.
9. Make accessible, upon request, all records of pesticide applications and advance notices for at least 90 days.

## Product Recalls and Bans

### Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)

#### Bans Candles With Lead-Cored Wicks

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) voted unanimously to ban the manufacture and sale of lead-cored wicks and candles with lead-cored wicks. CPSC determined that candles using lead-cored wicks could present a lead poisoning hazard to young children. The federal ban, which applies to all domestic and imported candles, should deter manufacturers from making non-conforming wicks, allow the U.S. Customs Service to stop shipments of non-conforming wicks and candles, and allow for the CPSC to seek penalties for violations of the ban.

"Over the past 30 years, CPSC has been at the forefront of protecting the nation's children from the hazards associated with lead," said CPSC Chairman Hal Stratton. "The ban of lead-cored candlewicks should give parents with young children peace of mind that the burning of votive, pillar or container candles will not emit a dangerous toxin."

A CPSC investigation found that despite a voluntary industry agreement in the 1970s to remove lead from candle wicks, a small percentage of candles sold in the past several years still contained lead-cored wicks. CPSC staff found that some lead-cored wicks could emit relatively large amounts of lead into the air during burning. Children may then inhale the vaporized lead, placing them at risk. Children may also be exposed to lead by mouthing objects on which lead has settled or by handling such objects and then mouthing their hands.

Some of the candles tested by CPSC staff emitted lead levels in excess of 3,000 micrograms per hour - about seven times the rate that could lead to elevated levels of lead in a child. CPSC estimates that an indoor air lead level of 430 micrograms per hour from burning candles could result in hazardous exposure to children.

Lead poisoning in children is associated with behavioral problems, learning disabilities, hearing problems and growth retardation. Although the primary source of lead poisoning in the United States is lead from paint in older homes, lead accumulates in the body, and even exposure to small amounts of lead can contribute to the overall level of lead in the blood.

Safe alternatives to lead-cored wicks, including zinc,

synthetic fibers, cotton and paper, are used by most candle and candle wick manufacturers. Currently, candles that use a metallic core in the wick most likely contain zinc. Because consumers cannot tell if a metal-cored wick contains lead or an alternative, consumers may wish to contact the retailer for information about the materials used in their candles.

The CPSC was petitioned to ban candlewicks containing lead cores and candles with such wicks by Public Citizen, the National Apartment Association, and National Multi Housing Council on February 20, 2001. The ban against manufacturing, importing, or selling candles with lead wicks will become effective in October 2003.

#### CPSC, MOSA Sports Announce Recall of Bicycle Helmets

WASHINGTON, D.C.- In cooperation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), MOSA Sports, of Hermosa Beach, Calif., is voluntarily recalling about 1,250 "Five 40" brand bicycle helmets. These helmets fail impact testing required under CPSC's Safety Standard for Bicycle Helmets, violating the Consumer Product Safety Act. Riders wearing these helmets are not adequately protected from falls, and could suffer head injuries.

CPSC and MOSA Sports have not received any reports of injuries or incidents involving these helmets. This recall is being conducted to prevent the possibility of injuries.

The Five 40 helmets are black, white or red, and have the name "Five 40" printed on the front and back of the helmet. The "V" in the "Five" is much larger than the other letters. A label inside the helmet reads "990803" along with the model name "540." These helmets were manufactured in China.

Sporting good stores nationwide sold these helmets from October 1999 through September 2001 for about \$25.

Consumers should stop using these helmets immediately and return them to the store where purchased or MOSA Sports for a refund or free replacement helmet. For more information, consumers should contact MOSA Sports at (800) 804-0211 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. PT Monday through Friday.

## **Product Recalls, Continued:**

### **CPSC, Fisher-Price Announce Recall of Little People® Animal Sounds Farms on 4/24/03**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - In cooperation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, (CPSC), Fisher-Price, of East Aurora, N.Y., is voluntarily recalling about 67,000 Little People® Animal Sounds Farms manufactured from June 17, 2002 through July 31, 2002. Two small metal screws that hold the toy "stall doors" in place can come off, posing an aspiration or choking hazard to young children.

Fisher-Price has received 33 reports of the screws coming off of the toy, including four reports where a screw was found in the child's mouth and one report of a child that aspirated a screw into his lung. The latter case required the child to be hospitalized and undergo emergency surgery to remove the screw from his lung.

The recalled Little People® Animal Sounds Farms are shaped like a barn and make animal sounds when the doors of the cow or horse stall are opened. The recalled

toys have a model number of 77973 or 77746 and a six-character manufacturing date code that begins with 168 through 212, followed by the number 2 as the fourth digit. Both the model number and date code can be found on the underside of the green ramp. The Fisher-Price logo appears at the top of the tallest side of the barn in red and white. The recalled toys were manufactured in Mexico.

Mass merchants and toy stores nationwide sold these toys between July 2002 and December 2002 for about \$30.

Consumers should take the toy away from young children immediately and contact Fisher-Price toll-free at (866) 259-7873 anytime to receive a free repair kit. Consumers also can log on to [www.service.mattel.com](http://www.service.mattel.com) to determine if their product is among the recalled models and to order the free repair kit online.

## **Join P2 EnviroRangers Web Club and Learn More About Preventing Pollution**

In remembrance of Earth Day, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2003, here is a fun website for kids to help them practice pollution prevention: <http://www.montana.edu/wwwp2er>. The P2 EnviroRangers Web Club is a club for kids who want to help the earth by practicing P2. It employs hands-on activities relating to common life issues to make the concept of P2 real and attainable. The club is moderated by ChickenWoman who helps create an on-line community for sharing ideas and accomplishments, fertile ground for learning more about integrating P2 into everyday life.